

Bay Colony Rail Trail

March 4, 2013



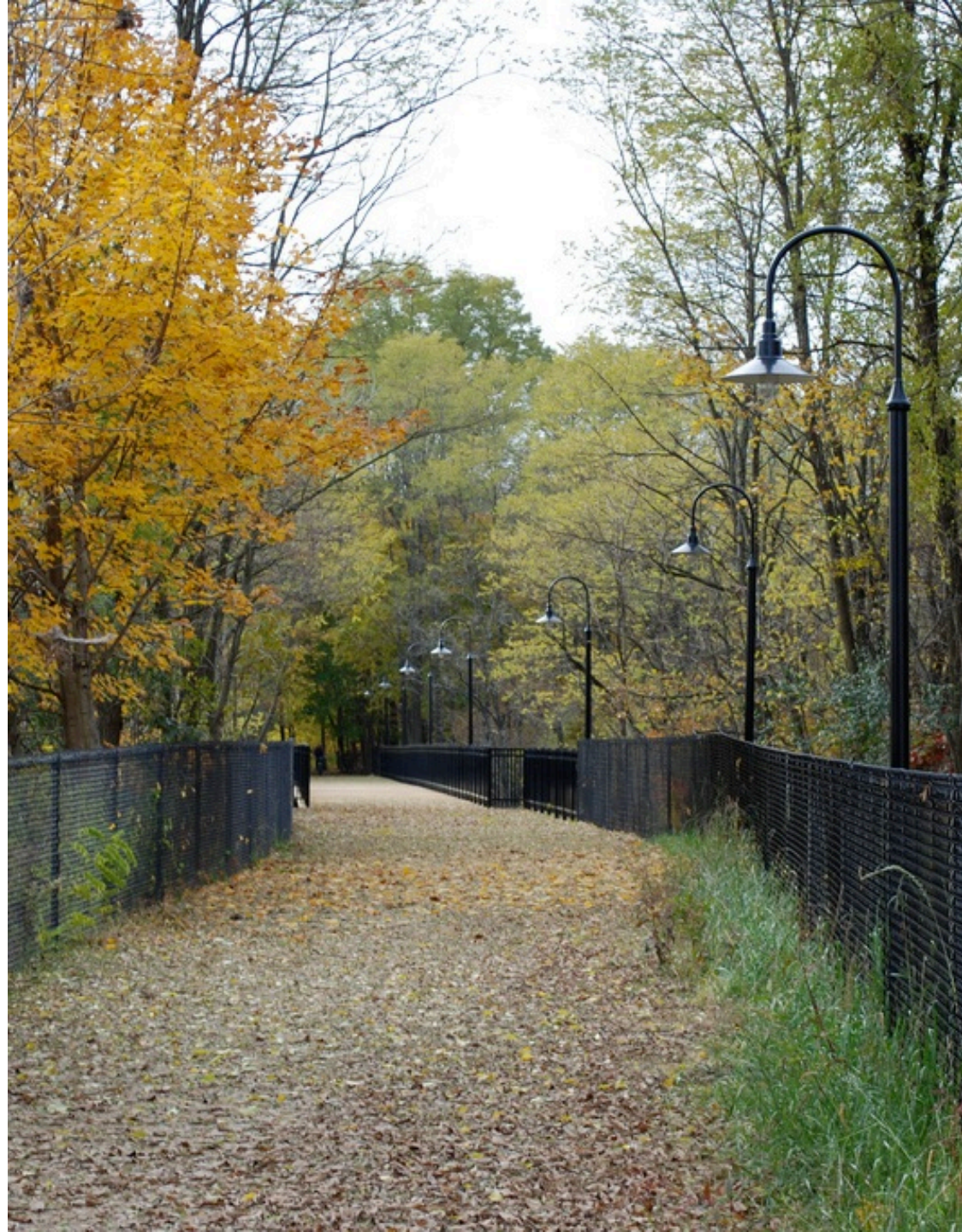
A Rail-Trail is a Linear Park

- A rail-trail is the conversion of an unused rail line into a shared-use recreational path.
- Rail-trails offer a safe place for walking, jogging, cycling, cross-country skiing, or horseback riding.
- Rail-trails can be paved, crushed stone, recycled asphalt, or just plain dirt.
- In Massachusetts, there are:
 - More than a hundred rail-trail projects
 - Dozens of completed rail-trails

Manhan Rail Trail, Easthampton, MA

Rail Trail Benefits

- **Health:** more recreation and opportunities to enjoy nature.
- **Transportation / Livability:** improved viable and safe transportation routes.
- **Environment:** choosing active transportation reduces your carbon miles.
- **Open Space Protection:** Trails preserve and maintain natural settings.
- **Community Identity:** Trails create civic pride and engender neighborliness.



Rail Trail between Dover and Portsmouth, NH



Popular Rail-Trails in Mass.

- Cape Cod Rail Trail
Wellfleet-Dennis, 22 miles
- Nashua River Rail Trail
Ayer-Nashua, 12.3 miles
- Minuteman Bikeway
Arlington-Bedford, 11 miles
- Shining Sea Bikeway
Falmouth-Woods Hole, 10.7 miles
- Norwottuck Rail Trail
Northampton-Belchertown, 10 mi.
- Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
Chelmsford-Westford, 6.8 miles
- Assabet River Rail Trail
Marlborough-Acton, 5.6 miles

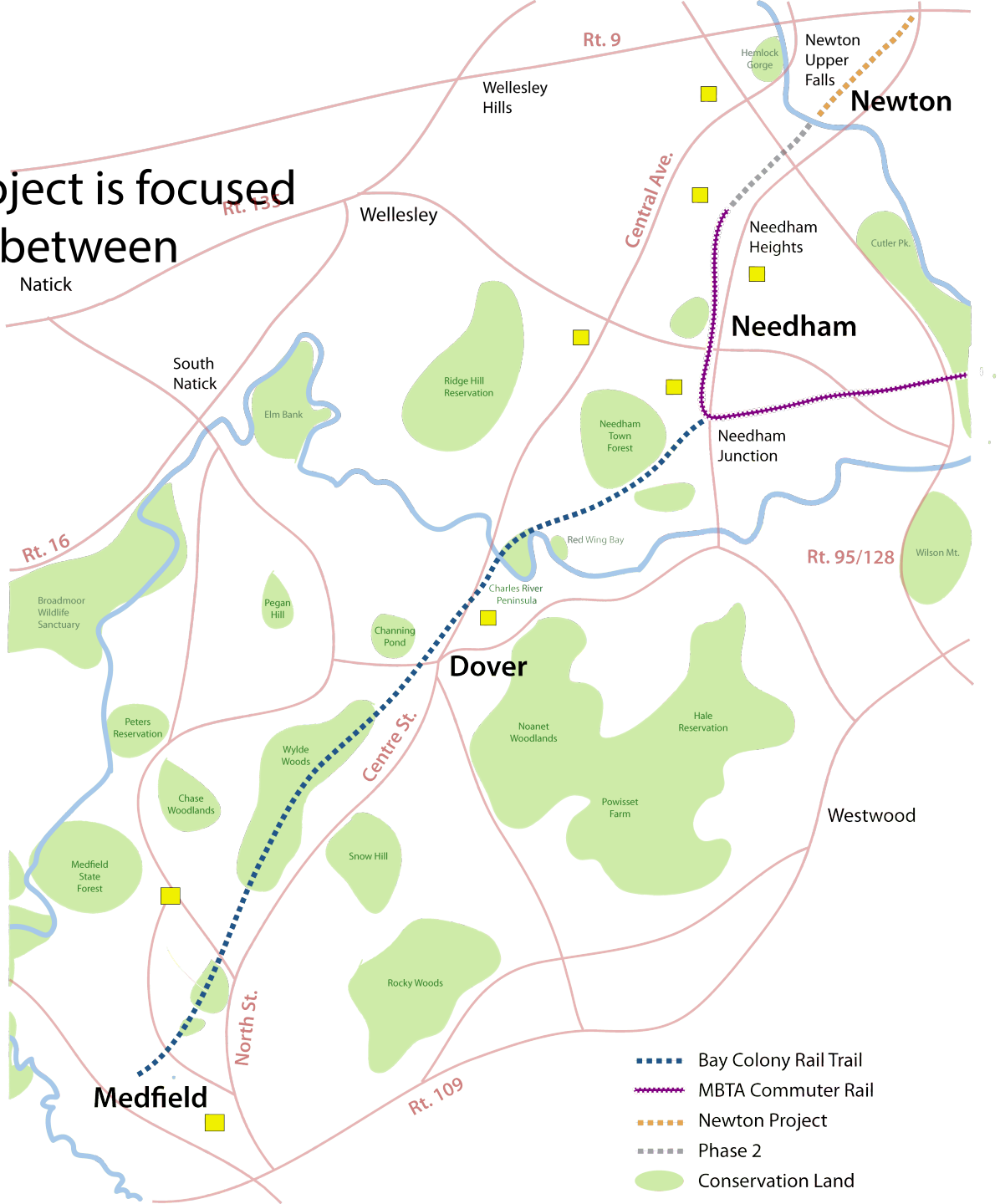
Looking across the trestle bridge to Dover

BCRT Overview

The Bay Colony Rail Trail project is focused on the inactive rail corridor between Medfield and Needham:

The entire length is 7 miles:

- Needham: 2 miles from Needham Junction to the Charles River.
- Dover: 3.5 miles from the Charles River to Hunt Drive.
- Medfield: 1.5 miles to Harding Street.
- Needham to Newton: Phase 2.



Stewards of the Project and Trail

- The Bay Colony Rail Trail Association is a non-profit organization focused on working with residents, officials and stakeholders to create and sustain the trail.
- Officials in Needham are working with BCRTA as their partner in evaluating and pursuing rail trail opportunities in town.

BCRT Needham

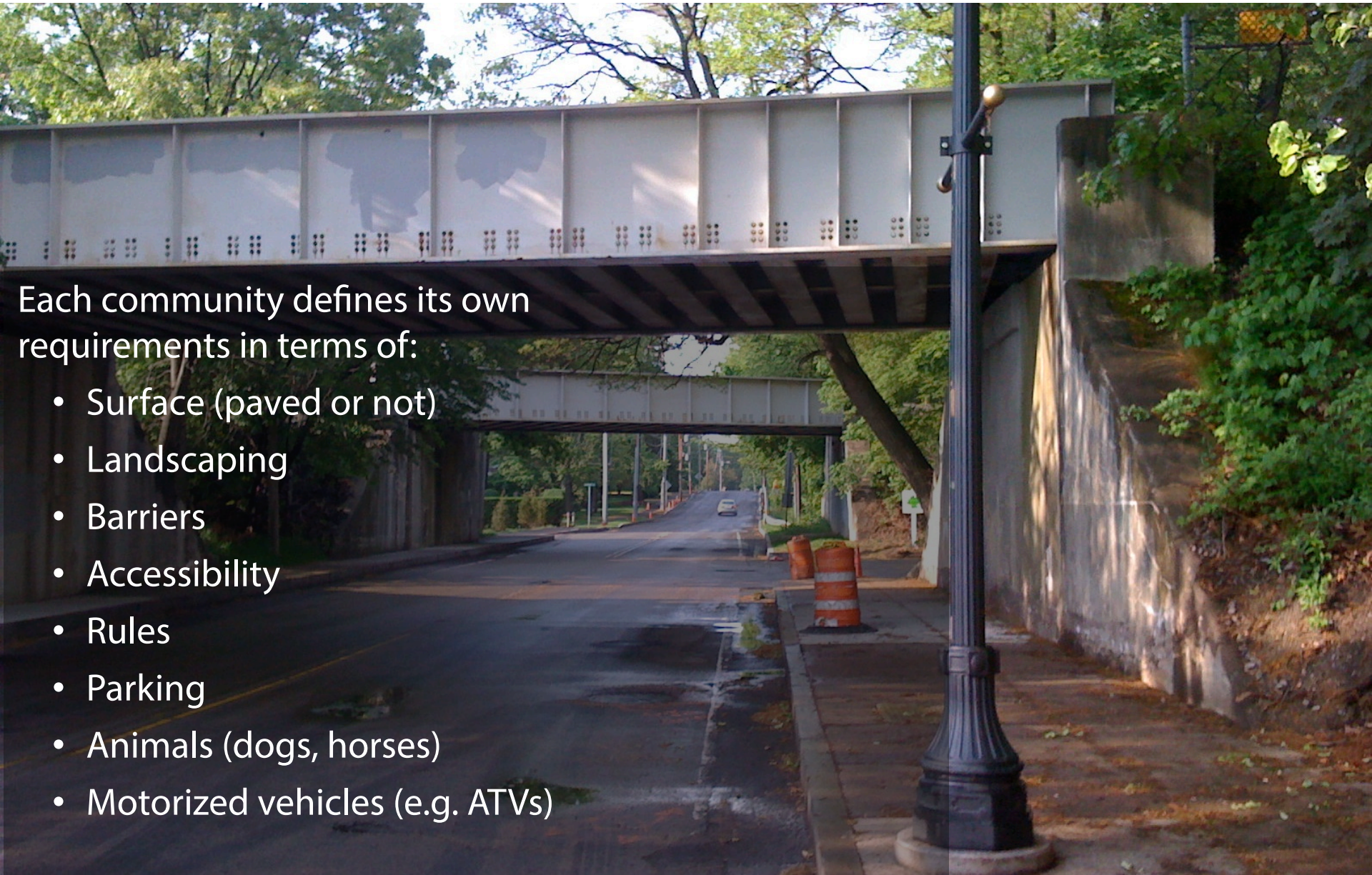
- BCRT Needham is a volunteer group of residents working toward the implementation of rail trails in the town.
- BCRT Needham is tackling things like research & documentation, public hearings and outreach, and fundraising.
- Next meeting Mar. 12 @ 7:30 pm

Needham Junction, looking west



No Two Rail Trails are the Same

Chestnut St. The 2nd bridge is the start of the BCRT



Each community defines its own requirements in terms of:

- Surface (paved or not)
- Landscaping
- Barriers
- Accessibility
- Rules
- Parking
- Animals (dogs, horses)
- Motorized vehicles (e.g. ATVs)



Converting Rail to Trail

- Rail trails can cost up to \$1 million / mile to build.
- Opportunity exists to take up rails and ties **for free**. Salvage value covers cost.
- The result: a crushed stone path, suitable for walking, jogging, etc.
- For an estimated \$20K/mile, it could be topped with hard-packed stone dust, which would enable biking, strolling, etc.
- This approach was done recently in Danvers, Wenham, Topsfield, and many more local towns.

Bay Colony Trail, looking toward Needham from bridge

Case Study: Danvers Rail Trail



- Iron Horse Preservation Society removed rails and ties for free
- Additional coarse gravel added for \$7,200 / mile
- Stone dust topping planned for another \$12-\$15K / mile.

- 4.3 miles, part of a 3-town 7.6 mile corridor.
- Great volunteer effort, funded by donations, residents are thrilled.
- Town's only formal effort was to paint road crossings





Current Focus

- BCRTA requested \$35K from Needham's Community Preservation Committee for a Conceptual Planning and Design study.
- At the special Town Meeting on Nov. 13th, our request was approved.
- BCRTA selected Fay, Spofford & Thorndike (FST) to conduct the study.
- The study will cover things such as:
 - Access
 - Parking
 - Drainage
 - At-Grade Crossings
 - State of the bridge (pictured)
 - Fencing
- The results of the study will be useful as background info for town decision makers.

Looking across the trestle bridge to Dover

Prospective Timeline

- 2012
 - ✓ Town meetings
 - ✓ Lease approved by MBTA
 - ✓ Begin work with town departments
 - ✓ Initial fundraising to cover design
- 2013
 - ✓ Begin design / planning work
 - ✓ **Public hearings with residents**
 - Win approval at town meeting
 - Sign lease
 - More fundraising for actual project
 - Remove rails and ties, complete surface
- 2014
 - Enable access points and crossings
 - Add top surface layer
 - Add amenities (benches, kiosks, etc.)
 - Ongoing maintenance & stewardship



Looking east, toward High Rock St. & Needham Junction

Thanks For Your Time

